According to the same informant, some warriors from this village had returned from a war a few days previously, bringing back with them the mummified heads of two of their enemies, necklaces of human teeth, and other trophies.

As it turned out, I did not regret my choice, for I was well received in Necodemos and I encountered there, more vivid than anywhere else, the legend of Mundurucu beginnings which considers this very maloca or village the cradle of the human race.

I continued up the Cadereri. Strange river! Every day we had to carry bodily our light boat over sand bars. Here was confirmed an opinion I had already formed, namely, that the Cadereri, as well as the Araguaia, Jurueña, Mamoré, and other upper branches of the great southern tributaries of the Amazon, such as the Tocantins, the Tapajoz, the Madeira and others, would dry up completely during the summer months, baring their channels, were it not for the falls of the middle course which serve to dam up the violent flow of the stream. The average gradient on the middle course of these great Amazon tributaries, which descend from the central plateau, is steeper than necessary to maintain a normal flow of water. [76]

Finally, on the morning of the sixth day as calculated by the Indian, we came upon a tree thrown across the river in the form of a bridge. On the bank stood a crude hut. There was no one around. We blew a horn to call out the owner of the hut, who was probably out hunting in the nearby woods. As no one appeared, we continued our journey. I left behind some trifling gifts to mark the passage of a friendly person.

I thought it best to behave in this fashion, remembering that Lieutenant Captain Soares Pinto had been attacked and killed by the savages for having destroyed some bridges which they had laid across the river. It is impossible to proceed upriver without destroying the bridges, and it is not always feasible to replace them.

For this reason, whenever I found myself unable to replace one in the same spot -- and on that day we encountered four more bridges -- I left gifts to make up in some degree for the damage I had caused the savages. At the end of the day the river became totally impassable: we could not carry the canoe any further. Happily, at this difficult moment we found another bridge over the river and a hut upon the bank. We blew our horn persistently,

[i.e., Necodemos - Analyst]

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[362] From the rafters hung ten hammocks, as well as bows, arrows, bowls and other objects. The youth offered us a bowl filled [362 574] with the fruit of the muriti palm (Mauricia venifera); he showed the greatest desire to [78] oblige us, and pronounced himself ready to accompany us to Necodemos if his father agreed. We blew our horn to call the father but no one appeared, and after waiting an hour I decided to move on and in fact did so, reluctantly leaving behind this engaging savage who had received me in his hut so cheerfully.

361 In the afternoon, having crossed the forest, we walked out upon a vast plain and saw on the crest of a hill the maloca or village of Abenanti

What startled me was that we always made such encounters when we least expected them, for I never succeeded in having the guide tell me beforehand what road we were to follow or what localities we were to encounter.

342 621 The village of Abenanti was under construction; it comprised but one large new house, with a thatch-covered roof which consisted of a simple leaning wall, slanting down from east to west.

[352] We found no one inside the house, but the large number of hammocks, bows, and arrows which hung from the roof indicated that it was occupied by several families.

The fire was lit; as usual we blew our horn in order to call the occupants of the house.

[609] It was not long before a slender youth appeared, a mistrustful look on his face, leading by the hand a small child who was very frightened and excited.

302 This youth was about twenty; his face was not yet completely painted. It merely bore the lozenges; that part which consists of a solid layer of black dye, as per the custom of the tribe, had not yet been completed. These drawings, with their geometric regularity and [78] their fresh and vivid color, stood out on his youthful complexion and lent his features a certain novel comeliness.

609 When night came they told me that a few men, women and children, who were turning in to the maloca from the surrounding woods had stopped by a nearby stream and hesitated to come home because of our presence.

123 609 In view of this I broke camp and moved about a mile away, leaving my interpreter to spend the night in Abenanti and to convince those mistrustful people that we had not the slightest intention to harm them.

M
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B
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In former times the Mundurucu also fought the Bacairi, whom they call [98] "Muruhûite," and forced them to move to Mato-Grosso where they were resettled.

They fought the Apiacá, and only left them alone when the latter settled on the Juruena River, at the foot of the Salto-Augusto Falls. Even today they are very much afraid of the Mundurucu, and when the latter pass through the Apiacá malocas on their way to war, the occupants furnish them with cassava and other supplies.

Iriuîte -- They have already withdrawn toward Cuiabá. They are bearded.

Tuparuîte -- They live toward the Xingu.

Nhauanhen -- This band belongs to the Parintintin tribe, and lives by the falls of the Jauanxin River, a tributary of the Tapajoz.

The Mundurucu of Necodemos know Cuiabá; but they say that many bands of fierce heathens roam those parts.

In the course of their journeys they meet yet other bands of savages whose names they do not know.

It may be assumed that part of the native populations that disappeared from the banks of the Tapajoz and of the Tocantins may now roam the valley of the Upper Xingu.

It might prove of scientific interest to study the movements of these unknown savage populations.

XI

There appears in the malocas an elegantly dressed Mundurucu who claims to have been baptized in Rio de Janeiro.

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It was only natural that I should invite the Mundurucu to come and share with us the advantages of life in society, and especially to [99] send us their children so they might be properly educated and return to the malocas knowing how to build houses and make bows, ovens and other things that would prove of great usefulness.

123 I was seeking through every means to convince them that they would find dedicated friends among us, when they replied that Teiu Burubê had told them H. M. the Emperor was a friend of the Mundurucu.

159 Teiu Burubê was a Mundurucu who had left the villages many years previously, and returned after a long absence. He presented himself in the maloca of Cabrol elegantly dressed after our fashion. His kinsmen greeted him with delight.

Then he told them that he had been baptized in Rio de Janeiro, that he had taken the name of *Martinho de Alcantara*, and that H. M. the Emperor had served as his godfather and patron. He found in the maloca of Cabrol various relatives, and in particular a sister who treated him with great devotion. When he had left his native village, at a very young age, he had been accompanied by a brother, and together they had traveled down the Canumã River.

This Mundurucu painted a vivid image of the advantages of civilized life, without moving his kinsmen to renounce their savage existence.

Eventually the change in his way of life made him ill, and he came down with violent fevers.

It was said in the maloca that his elegant clothes had cast an evil spell upon him, so his sister angrily gathered them on the village grounds and set them ablaze.

As he recovered from his illness he met even greater distress, for now he was naked.

He finally died; his sister, who had not forsaken him for an instant, buried him under her own hammock. [100]

XII

Population of the central Mundurucu malocas.

161 It is very difficult, indeed impossible, to furnish an exact 341 census of these Indians, living as they do in malocas situated in inaccessible stretches of bush country.

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KATIWAT, before you came to live with us, our lives were as always, and we were happy. We worked, we ate, and then we slept. When you came we were glad, for you brought us many fine gifts. And every night, instead of going to sleep, we sat with you, drank coffee, smoked your tobacco, and listened to your radio. But now you go, and we are sorry, for all of these things go with you. We now know pleasures to which we were unaccustomed, and we shall be unhappy.

The Chief of Cabruá upon our departure

[p. xi]

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THE SETTING

182 American standards, it is tame in comparison with the sit-
648 uation of a century ago when the Mundurucú were still in the heyday of their militarism. The lives of the native peoples are shorn of the elements of excitement and danger; pacification has no doubt been a relief to the weaker tribes, but to the Mundurucú it has been destructive. The tribe is now a society without important goals or a future, and its members know this well. Even more important in the progressive deterioration of the social fabric, though more insidious in its operation, has been trade and the activities that go into the acquisition of salable commodities. The effects of the relations of the Indians with the whites are obvious to the most casual inspection. When my wife, Yolanda, and I first walked into a Mundurucú village in 1952, we hardly expected to encounter a flamboyantly warlike people, for we knew well that the warring had ended some half-century ago. But we were psychologically
[177] unprepared for the dismal sight of Indians dressed in tattered cottons, for the cheap metal pots and pans, the rubber-tapping apparatus, and the little suitcases that sat in the rafters of every house and in which the people packed their clothes for journeys to their rubber trees or to trading posts. Little children with distended abdomens played in the dirt, hollow-ribbed dogs fought over scraps of fish entrails, and an occasional, and very unaboriginal, rooster crowed. The effect of the sun beating mercilessly on the mud huts in the village clearing, of the surrounding monotonous forest, of our inability to communicate with the people, and of our total incapacity to fend for ourselves in this strange environment, was a most depressing experience. This, I believe, is what some anthropologists refer to as "culture shock."

123 We settled in the village, acquired a Brazilian interpreter who spoke Portuguese and Mundurucú, and began to

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probe beneath the surface appearances. The Mundurucú were equally curious, and relentless to the exclusion of all personal privacy in their own ethnographic investigations on us. This is perhaps the worst part of field work, and it was more difficult for Yolanda than for me. The insect life forced her to dress in khakis, and only the canons of empiricism convinced the Mundurucú children—and many of the adults—that she was truly a female. The women shook her hammock before dawn to ask her if she was awake, and they made continuous and repetitive demands on her for bright glass beads. Her relations with the females were of a reciprocal nature; that she was another woman was more important than her role as a foreigner, and she was able to establish close rapport with them for field work. I, who did not hunt, fish, sow, or reap, could claim no such close identification with the men. Our research proceeded, and we found that there was still much that was distinctively Mundurucú below the veneer of material acquisitions. Beyond this, the grinding processes by which Mundurucú society had become transformed and is becoming transformed unfolded themselves through our observations of their continuing mode of existence. The headhunter's heritage, pale and secularized as it may be, was of consummate interest to us as social scientists.

This book, in essence, is the story of the relationship between the white man and the Mundurucú. It is a prosaic and simple tale, unadorned with episodes of valiant resistance and glory, and surprisingly lacking in oppression and suffering. But, perhaps for this reason, it contains an element of tragedy, because the processes of this history have worked inexorably upon Mundurucú society and cultrue for a century and a half and have brought a once proud people to the brink of social extinction.

The complex causes and processes of change in Mun-

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timbó parties the water is poisoned by two or three separate groups at points about 1,000 feet apart along the stream. As soon as the fish begin fleeing downstream from the group farthest upstream, a sentinel stationed a short distance downstream gives several loud shouts to the next group, signaling them to start beating the drug into the water. The fish thus have little opportunity to escape to pure water. To prevent any from making their escape, a dam made of branches set into the stream bottom is sometimes placed about a mile or two downstream from the fishing location. A space is left open until the morning of the fishing to allow fish to swim upstream during the night. This system is particularly effective to catch the *matrinchão* (*Brycon brevicaudatus* Gunther), which ascends the smaller streams every night to sleep and then returns downstream with the coming of day.

These communal fishing trips are undertaken by as many persons as can conveniently gather together; lack of canoes and the long distances between rubber-avenue dwellings limit the size of these gatherings among the contemporary campineiros. The efficacy of this system of fishing is remarkable. My wife and I took part in one such venture on the Cururú River in which more than one hundred people from four different villages participated, and approximately two tons of fish were killed. The surplus yield is preserved by smoking, salting, and sun drying, but due to the crudity of the process it remains edible for a period of only one week to ten days.

GATHERING OF WILD VEGETABLE PRODUCTS

Gathering of wild vegetables and fruits is and was the least important subsistence activity and food source in Mundurucú economic life; it is often done incidentally to hunting, fishing, or trips to the gardens. Among the main

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431 food, as well as other articles, is between houses of more closely related females. But sharing is not structured exclusively by kinship; food was also given to our household [123] without question or request for payment. It was understood by the Indians, of course, that we would ultimately reciprocate by the distribution of manufactured articles, but the mutual exchanges existed on a general level between our house and the village and not between individuals in a trade of specific commodities.

The women of all village households frequently coöp- 476 erate in the harvesting of manioc and the preparation of 244 farinha, especially when large quantities are to be pro- 252 duced. These occasions show lucidly how nebulous are 462 concepts of property among the savannah Mundurucú, for coöperation extends to the manufacture of farinha for trade to the whites. Men commonly arrange for the sale of [439] farinha to a trader and then call upon the women of their household to commence gathering and preparing the tubers. The women then invite women of other households to join them in the work. If the man who contracted the sale of farinha has an inadequate supply of manioc in his garden, the women frequently take the tubers from a garden in which there is a surplus, but which might belong to a member of another household. During the course of toasting the manioc flour, the invited women feel free to take portions of the completed product for their own households. The women of the house initiating production contribute most of the manioc and the bulk of the labor, and the productive process is, therefore, oriented to the household. The women of the other houses expect reciprocity at some time in the future, but there is no strict accounting of what is due in labor and manioc to individuals 422 or extended families.

574 That farinha belongs to whoever initiates its production
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571 578 592 males is extremely close knit and is probably the most cohesive group in Mundurucú society. Such is the emotional bond between the women of these groups that I know of [762] one who committed suicide because of alienation from her two sisters and house mates. But beyond the extended family, conflicts between individual women or households are common. All women of the household generally join with a member in her antipathy for another woman or household; this, of course, follows from the fact that the housemates are closely related to each other, which complements the allegiance arising from co-residence.

521 578 Hostility between the women generally takes the form of malicious gossip. My wife, Yolanda, was the recipient of most of the confidences that passed among the women, [123] which constituted one of our most valuable sources of information. Coleta, an Indian girl who lived in our house [115] and worked for us, used to regale Yolanda by the hour with tales of adultery and of the promiscuity of certain women. Coleta was an excellent source of such data, as she herself was well known for waywardness in affairs of the heart. And we usually managed to learn by this means of the well-repressed hostilities in the village, of fears and accusations of sorcery, and in general of relations between the sexes. Yolanda's participation in the gossip network brought her even closer to the women, and they, in turn, gossiped about her. One of the favored places for the exchange of female information and opinion was the shed where farinha was made. The women usually chatted animatedly as they worked there, but as soon as one left the group, the heads of the others drew together and she was thoroughly discussed; after a couple of months of residence in the village, the same thing happened, as we had no difficulty finding out, when Yolanda left their midst. Gossip is the chief form of expression of antagonism among

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439 466 648 an individual one. The patron is seen as the person who gives valued objects and who must be given something in return. Most residents of Cabruá gave sincere personal loyalty to their particular trader. This was often rationalized by the claim that one's own trader sold at cheaper prices and had more merchandise, but actually this is an interpersonal tie, defined by traditional status positions and role behavior, that has evolved through more than a century of commerce with Brazilians.

439 609 648 The client-patron relationship applies also to that between the Mundurucú and all white men of similar prestige position. The trader is called *katiwat;* or also *compá,* a corruption of the Brazilian term *compadre,* or co-father. The latter title was evidently learned from the white rubber collectors, for although the patron seldom acts as godparent to the children of Indians, he commonly does so for his Brazilian clients. Upon our arrival among the Mundurucú, I found myself being called by these terms, and I was expected by the Indians to assume the patron role. Many Indians understandably misunderstood our mission, and our large amount of supplies convinced them that I was a trader. Accordingly, some appeared with balls of smoked latex, in return for which they wished merchandise. After it was realized that we did not fit into the patron-client relationship, the people of Cabruá were willing to integrate us into the collective village economy and to designate us by kinship terms.

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439 648 484 Firsthand contact between the Mundurucú of the savannahs and their Brazilian neighbors can hardly be termed intensive or large-scale, but it is regular. The trader generally visits his customers at four- or six-week intervals during the rubber-collection season and sporadically during the rains. He brings two or three employees, some of whom are Mundurucú, on these trips, and rarely remains

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439 484 574 648 The Mundurucú also take great pleasure in their excursions to the Tapajós River. Although their main business is with their own patron, they often make side trips to other trading posts. During these stays, they attend the *rezas*, or prayer sessions, held by the patron's wife, and usually are welcomed at parties given by Brazilians. They sleep wherever there is room to hang a hammock and spend the days helping the patron or merely watching what little activity there may be. In the evenings, the visiting Mundurucú go to the patron's house, where they are served demitasse coffee. After one or two weeks they go home.

171 648 Since the traders' trips to the Indians are infrequent, and of short duration, these visits to the Tapajós shores constitute one of the principal means of learning the ways of the white men. The Mundurucú are extremely observant and sensitive to cultural differences. When in the houses of the traders, they usually remain silent except for an occasional exchange among themselves; but they watch intently and with interest. They are well aware of the depth of cultural and linguistic differences, and they occasionally subjected me to lengthy, and quite intelligent questioning on the speech and manners of Americans.

• [123]

191 648 Linguistic differences present a great barrier to cultural interchange. Only a few Brazilians possess any fluency in Mundurucú, and competence in Portuguese is similarly limited among the savannah dwellers. Most of the men speak a few words of Portuguese and understand a somewhat greater number. But their vocabulary is largely limited to simple and common words and phrases and to the names of items of commerce. No extensive direct communication of ideas between Mundurucú and Brazilian takes place.

177 648 This linguistic gulf is partly bridged by those bilingual